



View of Potomac Park From the Washington Monument.

authority to draw upon the civil service commission for their assistants.

#### Gas and Telephone Rates.

The Star's championship of the people's cause in the matter of gas and telephone rates serves as a type of its attitude on all matters intimately affecting the community. Engaging in an intimate discussion of details, it proved to Congress in both connections that the charges of the local companies were extortionate, and after some years of delay the legislators, in different years, ordered the prices to be reduced, that for gas by stages and that for telephone service suddenly and materially. The gas company accepted the mandate and has since been giving the people gas at lower rates, now \$1 a thousand cubic feet. But the telephone company obstructed the will of both Congress and the people and carried the case to court, with the result of delaying the inevitable day of reckoning. Throughout these proceedings The Star has followed the case closely, and has upon appropriate occasions urged Congress to pass some measure of compulsion, direct or indirect, which will result in a material reduction of the rates. Thus far, however, such a step has not been taken, and now the community looks either to the courts for an affirmation of the law or to Congress for a new enactment which will assuredly withstand judicial scrutiny.

#### Conventions and Expositions.

Washington is a natural convention city, and The Star has never wearied of welcoming national organizations to the capital. It has, furthermore, always believed that here should be held the great international expositions, such as have during the last ten years been located in a number of places. As far back as 1870 The Star indorsed such a plan, but the idea lapsed, being checked first by the great financial panic and then by the centennial of 1876, which was with good reason held in Philadelphia. During the late eighties The Star repeatedly referred to a growing sentiment in favor of holding an exposition in Washington in 1892 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America. All the preliminary work of making sentiment favorable to that great undertaking was done here, with The Star indorsing the project. When the time came to select the city for the big fair Congress shut its eyes to Washington's evident suitability and facilities, and for political reasons gave the Columbian exposition to Chicago. Nevertheless the capital continues to draw visitors by the thousands, who find here annually increasing attractions. When the great projects for the development of the parks and other features of Washington have been executed the capital will have become a permanent exposition of the highest type.

#### Charities.

The Star has always been prompt to espouse the cause of charity upon occasion. Its columns, both news and editorial, have ever been open to appeals for general or individual aid, and it has itself given liberally as a corporation to funds for the succor of the poor when stress of weather has necessitated the institution of relief measures. Fifteen years ago The Star aided

in the organization of a "Christmas Club," for the aid of needy school children lacking in shoes and clothing. The idea developed and "The Evening Star Santa Claus Club" later became a striking institution from season to season. One year presents for poor little folks were offered through the club and were sent in abundance to make happy many scores of homes on Christmas eve. The gold pins and blue ribbon of the club's badges were to be seen in all parts of the District, worn by public school pupils, whose teachers were The Star's valuable allies in raising these yearly funds for providing proper gear for the children of the poor.

The Star's "pound parties" were an evolution of the Santa Claus Club idea. Whenever great need has arisen for direct aid The Star has called for contributions, and, receiving them in vast quantities from the generous citizens, who have always shown confidence in it as an agent of their charities, it has distributed them to the sufferers with the assistance and advice of the organizations which keep closely in touch with the needs of the poor.

#### Inauguration Date.

One of The Star's most insistent pleas for congressional action for the benefit not alone of the people of Washington, but of the whole country, has been that for a change of the date of the inauguration of the President. In and out of season it has pressed this matter. Whenever inauguration day approaches it points to the strong probability of a bitter encounter with the elements on the 4th of March. Too often has the day been dangerously stormy or cold to permit continued indifference to this important subject, and there is now organized, as The Star suggested, a national committee of governors and congressmen and citizens of Washington working for the adoption of the necessary constitutional amendment.

#### The Crusade Against Lawlessness.

The Star has always stood stanchly a champion of law and order in the District and those regions lying near enough to affect its peace and welfare. Its ideal of a national capital has been a city of good citizenship, and the enforcement of law, and it has deplored and stubbornly resisted all forms of disorder and offensive immorality within the capital area. The retrocession to Virginia of its share of the original District gave rise to a sad state of affairs just across the Potomac, which this paper has sought strenuously to abate. Gamblers and other vicious characters have found in Alexandria county a refuge, despite the combined resistance of the decent residents of that section and practically the whole of Washington. Some years ago The Star carried its crusade against these corruptors of the public morals to the state capitol at Richmond and enlisted the co-operation of the governor. Some good work was then done, and since that time the evil resorts across the river have been less objectionable, although there is much yet to be done to spare the District from the influence and maraudings of these elements on that side. Latterly a similar state of affairs has developed on the Maryland side, to the east, but, thanks to the co-operation of the authorities of that state, The Star has been enabled

to lead the way to a reform movement there as well through its repeated news publications and editorials.

#### Maintaining the Organic Act.

It is impossible to enumerate all the ways in which The Star has exerted its influence for the evolution of a great city, well administered and equipped. Its efforts to that end have been constant and the record is long beyond recital. Throughout the years, however, one thought has been uppermost in all that it has undertaken—the nationalizing of Washington. Since 1878 it has conceived that this end was most surely to be attained through a strict preservation of the spirit and letter of the organic act passed in that year by Congress, dividing the expense of capital maintenance equally between the government and the District. Repeatedly The Star has opposed projects which would redound to the immediate material benefit of the community, on the ground that they involved an infraction of this principle. Washington might have been more richly equipped as a municipality had this insistence upon the partnership been modified or compromised. But The Star has foreseen bankruptcy for the city in alluring plans for improvements solely at the District's expense. This city, hampered as is its commercial opportunity, cannot possibly maintain itself alone. The government's payment of half of the expense of maintenance is not only just but necessary. Were all the real estate here taxed as in other cities the District could manage, perhaps, though with difficulty, to proceed with its evolution as a capital without direct aid. The government's share, therefore, is in lieu of taxes, and it must be continued or the progression of Washington toward the ideal of an American capital and its future maintenance as a great federal city will be impossible.

#### Street Extensions.

The Star has held that trifling violations of the organic act are as dangerous as large ones. It protested vigorously when, in 1892, Congress deliberately appropriated \$90,000 solely out of the District's revenues for the entertainment of the G. A. R. encampment of that year. The District could far better have afforded to give \$180,000 of its own money to match an equal amount of government money for that purpose than to have been thus compelled to pay \$90,000 without aid. The evil influence of this first breach in the partnership agreement was apparent when it became necessary to extend the streets of the city into the suburbs, rapidly growing on an urban basis. This enterprise was merely the logical result of the growth of the capital, in turn the result of the growth of the whole country. Congress had assumed "exclusive jurisdiction" over the "ten miles square" denominated the national capital. It was merely a matter of municipal convenience that for years a certain urban boundary was drawn between the city and county subdivisions of the District. Yet Congress, with a reasoning which opposed only the feeblest answer to the overwhelming arguments presented by The Star and the far-seeing citizens, construed the organic act as applying only to the city of old times, the restricted city of war times and earlier, when the time came to expand and

to lay the foundations for future systematic growth outward.

#### A Costly Experience.

This was a sad experience for the District, and a costly one. It threatened a return of the old days of municipal bankruptcy. For some years Congress had been ignoring the organic act, in respect to the manner of writing the annual District appropriations, failing to match with a federal dollar every District dollar raised by taxation. The result was a surplus of District money, in itself an anomaly under the statute. That surplus was used to pay, in part, the enormous street extension cost, and now the District, suffering from the heavy burden of the balance, has been required to raise even heavier sums in the tax money in order to conduct other great projects of development on practically a cash payment basis.

#### Excessive Taxation.

Against the illegal and inequitable street extension practice adopted by Congress The Star unceasingly protested. It is now engaged in likewise protesting against the proposition that the District shall pay out of current revenues its half of the cost of such works as great sewer extensions, railroad terminals, municipal building, bridges, filtration plant and the like, all of which will redound more distinctly to the benefit of future taxpayers than to that of those of today. When last session Congress insisted upon an increase of the tax revenues of the District, passing a personal tax law, and by applying pressure on the assessors of the District forcing a very heavy reassessment of the realty, The Star sounded a note of warning that such a process, unchecked, would bring the District partnership to a crisis.

#### The National Idea Will Live.

That partnership cannot be violated unless the government is willing to see the retrogression of its capital into its former deplorable, disgraceful state. The day for capital-moving schemes, so rife thirty years ago, and at intervals since, has forever passed. Washington will always remain the seat of government, despite the great drift of population to the west. It will not lapse either in splendor as a capital or in completeness and perfection as a municipality. If overtaxed and hampered in its local development to suit the whims of short-sighted legislators, the pride of the people in the District and their sense of fair play will soon demand a change. For the welfare of Washington is today more intelligently guarded by the rest of the country than ever before. This city means something to the average citizen of the states that was previously unfelt beyond the District line. The city has become nationalized and it cannot become denationalized by reason of any unfair or short-sighted policy of legislation.

Therefore The Star, on its fiftieth anniversary, being just a little less than half as old as Washington, feels confident of the future and grateful that it has been enabled, through the zealous support of its readers and friends in and out of Congress, to take such a large part in the work of rescuing the capital from its former low estate and placing it so high on the national plane.